

/463 cont. /

115 "in Deinem Thau gesund mich baden" /to bathe myself sound in
153 your dew/, the little fellow immediately interrupted with "itáu!
akau, áu" = "my hair, your hair, his hair." This game was all
the more original since the cadet Caldas, their schoolmaster,
who was also supposed to be working on the Bororó language,
pronounced the American pronominal prefixes which I was seek-
ing to be silly humbug and an invention of the boys, on the order
of chicken talk. And he stuck to it, because he was very stubborn
in his views. He was also very scornful of our opinion that Latin is
a dead language, for he said it is spoken in Egypt. But what was
even worse, he maintained that "Müller" -- heaven knows where
he got his knowledge of his only German word -- was a French
word and insisted on it, despite the amusing despair of Ehrenreich,
who, as a native Spree-Athenian /a Berliner/, was shaken to the
depths of his thinking and feeling in the face of such an unheard-
of attack on the Berlin address-book.

872 If Caldas, who received an extra allowance for the instruction
of the Bororó boys, did not learn much from his pupils, they
probably learned even less from him. It is true, the rogues came
unwillingly; in the beginning they did not come at all and were
persuaded to do so only when a few inquisitive fathers sat with
them in the school. The way in which the recalcitrant ones were
assembled in the morning reminded one vividly of the game
"bringing the little pig into the pen." Moreover, they were
extremely inattentive. I must admit, however, that the method
could not have been more peculiar. I thought the children would
first of all learn the Portuguese names for the most familiar
things, useful plants, animals, implements, which would certainly
have pleased them, because they asked about them spontaneously.
I also thought, if they absolutely had to learn to read -- but it
really does not matter what I thought, and it is better to limit
oneself to the report.

Each of the boys had in his hand a sheet of paper that Caldas
had written on. Thereupon we read -- not they, of course --
al, el, il, ol, ul, bal, bel, bil, bol, bul, dal, del, dil, dol,
dul, etc. over the entire page. The teacher read them one line

/463 cont. /

872 after the other, the boys had to recite after him. For hours they practiced, gaily waving their paper, "bal, bel, bil, bol, bul, dal, del, dil, dol, dul." In several months they had not gone beyond this. Caldas himself seemed impatient, and during the short time that we were able to endure the performance he asked three times what time it was. Two Bororó fathers were sitting in the /464/ corner and occasionally also murmured absent-mindedly bal, bel, bil, bol, bul. Among my linguistic notes I find that the Bororó told me, "he is teaching the boys to read"; the sentence in literal translation corresponds exactly to the situation: "he is teaching the boys to look at the paper." Caldas hoped, however, that there would soon be progress; he said the boys were an ill-behaved lot who first had to learn obedience. Up to now he had hit their fingers with a ruler if they did not pay attention. Now, however, he had an improved system of "palmtorios," two specimens of which he showed us. They looked like wooden spoons, except that they had a circular, flat end-piece, and this -- here was the improvement -- was perforated with holes like a sieve. The air whistles through the holes and this increases the pain. Well, I hope the new palmtorios stood the test and that the boys have meanwhile progressed at least as far as xal, xel, xil, xol, xul. In our day the entire result was always just dal, del, dil, dol, dul.

578 The hostile brothers. On 9 April Arateba, in his drunkenness, again put on one of his sensational performances. Burning with [273] rage, he tears down the house of a widow who would not let him have his way. He is quickly finished with this work, even though he threatens to fall over backwards with each jerk. His brother and two sensible friends hoist him on their shoulders and take him to his hut. There he has the weeping blues for a quarter of an hour, but after cold water has been poured over him he pulls himself together again and appears in front of headquarters. He 593 strides up and down like a roaring lion in a cage and challenges his brother, upon whom he heaps abuse in front of all the people, to a fight. His brother leaps at him and, crouched over, hops back and forth in front of him for a while; then they clutch each other with furious holds. Arateba is thrown to the ground four times.